5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

CHAPTER XXIII

HILL WARFARE AND STATE ROBES

DURING the night, snow fell freely on all the hills, and the ground was covered even in the low-lying district where Ah-ku's house is. Very early two of the maids were busy at a stone mill, husking some rice for breakfast. The stone mill in the home is almost universal in all the country places, and husking rice and buckwheat, grinding maize and beans, is one of the chief duties of the women and girls. Some of the mills are very heavy, and need a lot of strength to work them. Occasionally they are turned by persons walking around them and pushing with their chests against sticks tied to the sides of the upper stone. Here and there, in a large village, there is a mill worked by a horse, which is blindfolded. He continues his monotonous round and round all the day long. Were the animal not blindfolded he would soon be too giddy to keep on with his work. I saw some children one day imitating one of these mill horses by catching hold of a pillar and going round and round until they were too giddy to keep on any longer standing up. They then changed hands and went round in the reverse direction, unwinding themselves, as they said. Presently, when they had finished, they stood upright without a trace of giddiness.

Wandering about Ah-ku's house was a tame male pheasant belonging to one of the boys, and in a cage was a dove. One of the commonest of the cage birds in West China is the